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THE SONNETS AND BALLATE

OF

GUIDO CAVALCANTI

THE SONNETS AND BALLATE

OF

GUIDO CAVALCANTI

WITH TRANSLATION AND INTRODUCTION

BY

EZRA POUND

AUTHOR OF "PROVENÇA," "THE SPIRIT OF ROMANCE"
"PERSONÆ," "EXULTATIONS," "CANZONI"

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AS MUCH OF THIS BOOK AS IS MINE

I SEND TO MY FRIENDS

VIOLET AND FORD MADDOX HUEFFER

I have owned service to the deathless dead
Grudge not the gold I bear in livery.

OH dissi lui, non se' tu Oderisi,
L' onor d' Agobbio, e l' onor di quell' arte
Ch' alluminare è chiamata in Parisi?

FRATE, diss' egli, più ridon le carte,
Che pennelleggia Franco Bolognese:
L' onore è tutto or suo, e mio in parte.

BEN non sare' io stato sì cortese
Mentre ch' io vissi, per lo gran disio
Dell' eccellenza, ove mio core intese.

DI tal superbia qui si paga 'l fio:
Ed ancor non sarei qui, se non fosse,
Che, possendo peccar, mi volsi a Dio.

O VANAGLORIA dell' umane posse,
Com' poco verde su la cima dura,
Se non è giunta dall' etati grosse!

CREDETTE Cimabue nella pintura
Tener lo campo, ed ora ha Giotto il grido,
Sì che la fama di colui oscura.

COSÌ ha tolto l' uno all' altro Guido
La gloria della lingua: e forse e nato
Chi l' uno e l' altro caccerà di nido.

NON è il mondan romore altro ch' un fiato
Di vento, ch' or vien quinci ed or vien quindi,
E muta nome, perchè muta lato.

Dante in "Purgatorio," XI.

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INTRODUCTION

"CIMABUE thought that in portraiture
He held the field; now Giotto hath the cry
And all the former fame is turned obscure;
Thus hath one Guido from the other reft
The glory of our tongue, and there's perchance
One born who shall un-nest both him and him."

Even the qualification in the last line of this speech which Oderesi, honour of Agobbio, illuminator of fair pages, makes to Dante in the terrace for the purgation of Pride, must be balanced by Dante's reply to Guido's father among the burning tombs (Inf. X), sic.

Cavalcante di Cavalcanti:

"If by the height of genius thou dost go
Through this blind prison house; where is my son?
Why is he not with thee?"

Dante:

"I come not of myself,
But he, who awaiteth there (i. e. Virgil), doth lead me through."

After these passages from "The Commedia" there should be small need of my writing introductions to

the poems of Guido Calvacanti, for if he is not among the major prophets, he has at least his place in the canon, in the second book of The Arts, with Sappho and Theocritus; with all those who have sung, not all the modes of life, but some of them, unsurpassedly; those who in their chosen or fated field have bowed to no one.

It is conceivable that poetry of a far-off time or place requires a translation not only of word and of spirit, but of "accompaniment," that is, that the modern audience must in some measure be made aware of the mental content of the older audience, and of what these others drew from certain fashions of thought and speech. Six centuries of derivative convention and loose usage have obscured the exact significances of such phrases as: "The death of the heart," and "The departure of the soul."

Than Guido Cavalcanti no psychologist of the emotions is more keen in his understanding, more precise in his expression; we have in him no rhetoric, but always a true description, whether it be of pain itself, or of the apathy that comes when the emotions and possibilities of emotion are exhausted, or of that stranger state when the feeling by its intensity surpasses our powers of bearing and we seem to stand aside and watch it surging across some thing or being with whom we are no longer identified.

The relation of certain words in the original to the practice of my translation may require gloze. *L'anima* and *la Morte* are feminine, but it is not always expeditious to retain this gender in English. *Gentile* is 'noble'; 'gentleness' in our current sense would be *soavitate*. *Mente* is 'mind,' 'consciousness,' 'apperception.' The *spiriti* are the 'senses,' or the 'intelligences of the senses,' perhaps even 'the moods,' when they are considered as 'spirits of the mind.' *Valore* is 'power.' *Virtute*, 'virtue,' 'potency,' requires a separate treatise. Pater has explained its meaning in the preface to his "The Renaissance," but in reading a line like

"*Vedrai la sua virtù nel ciel salita*"

one must have in mind the connotations alchemical, astrological, metaphysical, which Swedenborg would have called the correspondences.

The equations of alchemy were apt to be written as women's names and the women so named endowed with the magical powers of the compounds. *La virtù* is the potency, the efficient property of a substance or person. Thus modern science shows us radium with a noble virtue of energy. Each thing or person was held to send forth magnetisms of certain effect; in Sonnet XXXV, the image of his lady has these powers.

It is a spiritual chemistry, and modern science and modern mysticism are both set to confirm it.

"*Vedrai la sua virtù nel ciel salita.*"

The heavens were, according to the Ptolemaic system, clear concentric spheres with the earth as their pivot; they moved more swiftly as they were far-removed from it, each one endowed with its *virtue*, its property for affecting man and destiny; in each its star, the sign visible to the wise and guiding them. A logical astrology, the star a sort of label of the spiritual force, an indicator of the position and movement of that spiritual current. Thus "her" presence, his Lady's, corresponds with the ascendency of the star of that heaven which corresponds to her particular emanation or potency. Likewise,

"*Vedrai la sua virtù nel ciel salita.*"

Thou shalt see the rays of this emanation going up to heaven as a slender pillar of light, or, more strictly in accordance with the stanza preceding: thou shalt see depart from her lips her subtler body, and from that a still subtler form ascends and from that a star, the body of pure flame surrounding the source of the *virtù,* which will declare its nature.

I would go so far as to say that "Il Paradiso" and the form of "The Commedia" might date from this line; very much as I think I find in Guido's "Place

where I found people whereof each one grieved overly of Love," some impulse that has ultimate fruition in Inferno V.

These are lines in the sonnets; is it any wonder that "F. Z." is able to write:

"His (Guido's) canzone solely on the nature of Love was so celebrated that the rarest intellects, among them 'il beato Egidio Colonna,' set themselves to illustrating it with commentaries, of which the most cited is that of Mazzuchelli."

Another line, of which Rossetti completely loses the significance is

"*E la beltate per sua Dea la mostra.*" (Sonnet VII, 11.)

"Beauty displays her for her goddess." That is to say, as the spirit of God became incarnate in the Christ, so is the spirit of the eternal beauty made flesh dwelling amongst us in her. And in the line preceding,

"*Ch' a lei s'inchina ogni gentil virtute*"

means, that "she" acts as a magnet for every "gentil virtute," that is, the noble spiritual powers, the invigorating forces of life and beauty bend toward her; not

"To whom are subject all things virtuous."

The *inchina* implies not the homage of an object but the direction of a force.

In the matter of these translations and of my knowl-

edge of Tuscan poetry, Rossetti is my father and my mother, but no one man can see everything at once.

The twelfth ballata, being psychological and not metaphysical, needs hardly be explained. Exhausted by a love born of fate and of the emotions, Guido turns to an intellectual sympathy,

"Love that is born of loving like delight,"

and in this new force he is remade,

"*formando di disio nova persona*"

yet with some inexplicable lack. His sophistication prevents the complete enthusiasm. This "new person" which is formed about his soul

"*amar gia non osa*"

knowing "The end of every man's desire."

The facts of Guido's life, as we know them from other evidence than that of his own and his friends' poems, are about as follows: Born 1250 (circa), his mother probably of the Conti Guidi. In 1266 or 1267 "Cavalcante di Cavalcanti gave for wife to his son Guido one of the Uberti," i. e., the daughter of Farinata. Thus Villani. Some speak of it as a "betrothal." In 1280 he acted as one of the sureties of the peace arranged by Cardinal Latino. We may set 1283 as the date of his reply to Dante's first sonnet. In 1284 he was a member of the grand council with Dino Compagni

and Brunetto Latino. In party feuds of Florence Guelf, then a "White" with the Cherci, and most violent against Corso Donati. 1292–96 is the latitude given us for the pilgrimage to the holy house of Galicia. Corso, it is said, tried to assassinate him on this pilgrimage. It is more plausible to accept 1292 as the date of the feud between the Cavalcanti and the Bundelmonti, dating so the sonnet to Neronne. For upon his return from the pilgrimage which had extended only to Toulouse, Guido attacks Corso in the streets of Florence. and for the general turmoil ensuing, the leaders of both factions were exiled. Guido was sent with the "Whites" to Sarzana, where he caught his death fever. Dante at this time (1300) being a prior of Florence, was party to decree of exile, and perhaps aided in procuring Cavalcanti's speedy recall. "Il nostro Guido" was buried on August 29, whence writes Villani, "and his death is a great loss, for as he was philosopher, so was he man of parts in more things, although somewhat punctilious and fiery." Boccaccio considers him "probably" the "other just man," in Dante's statement that there were two in Florence.

Benevenuto says so positively, "*alter oculus Florentiae*." In the Decameron we hear that, "He was of the best logicians in the world, a very fine natural philosopher. Thus was he *leggiadrisimo*," and there is

much in this word with which to confute those who find no irony in his sonnets; "and habile and a great talker." On the "sixth day" (novel nine) the queen herself tells how he leapt over an exceeding great tomb to escape from that bore Betto Brunelleschi. Other lines we have of him as: "noble and pertinent and better than another at whatever he set his hand to"; among the critics, Crescimbene notes, "*robustezza e splendore*"; Cristofore Landiano, "*sobrio e dotto,* and surpassed by a greater light he became not as the moon to the sun. Of Dante and Petrarcha, I speak elsewhere."

Filippo Villani, with his translator Mazzuchelli, set him above Petrarch, speaking of him as "Guido of the noble line of the Cavalcanti, most skilled in the liberal arts, Dante's contemporary and very intimate friend, a man surely diligent and given to speculation, 'physicus' (? natural philosopher) of authority . . . worthy of laud and honor for his joy in the study of 'rhetoric,'[1] he brought over the fineness of this art into the rhyming compositions of the common tongue (*eleganter traduxit*). For canzoni in vulgar tongue and in the advancement of this art he held second place to Dante, nor hath Petrarch taken it from him."

Dino Compagni, who knew him, has perhaps left us the most apt description, saying that Guido was

[1] "Rhetoric" must not here be understood in the current sense of our own day. "Exact and adequate speech" might be a closer rendering.

"*cortes e ardito, ma sdegnoso e solitario,*" at least I would so think of him, "courteous, bold, haughty and given to being alone." It is so we find him in the poems themselves."

Dante's delays in answering the elder Cavalcante's question (Inf. X) "What said you? 'He (Guido) *had?*' Lives he not still, with the sweet light beating upon his eyes?" This delay is, I think, a device for reminding the reader of the events of the year 1300. One who had signed a decree of exile against his friend, however much civic virtue was thereby displayed, might well delay his answer.

And if that matchless and poignant ballad,

"*Perch' io non spero di tornar gia mai*"

had not reached Florence before Dante saw the vision, it was at least written years before he wrote the tenth canto of the Inferno.

Guido left two children, Andrea and Tancia. Mandetta of Toulouse is an incident. As to the identity of "our own Lady," that Giovanna "presumably" of whom Dante writes in the Vita Nuova, sonnet fourteen, and the prose preceding, weaving his fancy about Primavera, the first coming Spring, St. John the Forerunner, with Beatrice following Monna Vanna, as the incarnate love: Again in the sonnet of the enchanted ship, "*Guido vorrei* . . ." we find her mentioned in the

chosen company. One modern writer would have us follow out the parallels between the Commedia and "Book of His Youth," and identify her with the "Matilda" of the Earthly Paradise. By virtue of her position and certain similarities of phrasing in Purgatory XXVIII and one of the lives of the saint, we know that Matilda in some way corresponds to or balances John the Baptist. Dante is undoubtedly reminded of his similar equation in the Vita Nuova and shows it in his

> "*Tu mi fai remembrar, dove e qual era*
> *Proserpina, nel tempo che perdette*
> *La madre lei, ed ella primavera.*"

Dante's commentators in their endless search for exact correspondences, seem never to suspect him of poetical innuendo, of calling into the spectrum of the reader's mind associated things which form no exact allegory. So far as the personal Matilda is concerned, the great Countess of Tuscany has some claims, and we have nothing to show that Giovanna was dead at the time of the vision.

As to the actual identity of Guido's lady—granting her to have been one and not several—no one has been rash enough to suggest that *il nostro Guido* was in love with his own wife, to whom he had been wedded or betrothed at sixteen. True it would have been con-

trary to the laws of chivalric love, but Guido was not one to be bound by a convention if the whim had taken him otherwise. The discussion of such details and theories is futile except in so far as it may serve to bring us more intimately in touch with the commune of Florence and the year of grace one thousand three hundred.

As for the verse itself: I believe in an ultimate and absolute rhythm as I believe in an absolute symbol or metaphor. The perception of the intellect is given in the word, that of the emotions in the cadence. It is only, then, in perfect rhythm joined to the perfect word that the two-fold vision can be recorded. I would liken Guido's cadence to nothing less powerful than line in Blake's drawing.

In painting, the color is always finite. It may match the color of the infinite spheres, but it is in a way confined within the frame and its appearance is modified by the colors about it. The line is unbounded, it marks the passage of a force, it continues beyond the frame.

Rodin's belief that energy is beauty holds thus far, namely, that all our ideas of beauty of line are in some way connected with our ideas of swiftness or easy power of motion, and we consider ugly those lines which connote unwieldy slowness in moving.

Rhythm is perhaps the most primal of all things known to us. It is basic in poetry and music mutu-

ally, their melodies depending on a variation of tone quality and of pitch respectively, as is commonly said, but if we look more closely we will see that music is, by further analysis, pure rhythm; rhythm and nothing else, for the variation of pitch is the variation in rhythms of the individual notes, and harmony the blending of these varied rhythms. When we know more of overtones we will see that the tempo of every masterpiece is absolute, and is exactly set by some further law of rhythmic accord. Whence it should be possible to show that any given rhythm implies about it a complete musical form — fugue, sonata, I cannot say what form, but a form, perfect, complete. Ergo, the rhythm set in a line of poetry connotes its symphony, which, had we a little more skill, we could score for orchestra. *Sequitur,* or rather *inest:* the rhythm of any poetic line corresponds to emotion.

It is the poet's business that this correspondence be exact, i. e., that it be the emotion which surrounds the thought expressed. For which cause I have set here Guido's own words, that those few of you who care, may read in them the signs of his genius. By the same token, I consider Carducci and Arnone blasphemous in accepting the reading

E fa di claritate tremar l'are

instead of following those *mss.* which read

E fa di clarità l'aer tremare.

I have in my translations tried to bring over the qualities of Guido's rhythm, not line for line, but to embody in the whole of my English some trace of that power which implies the man. The science of the music of words and the knowledge of their magical powers has fallen away since men invoked Mithra by a sequence of pure vowel sounds. That there might be less interposed between the reader and Guido, it was my first intention to print only his poems and an unrhymed gloze. This has not been practicable. I can not trust the reader to read the Italian for the music after he has read the English for the sense.

These are no sonnets for an idle hour. It is only when the emotions illumine the perceptive powers that we see the reality. It is in the light born of this double current that we look upon the face of the mystery unveiled. I have lived with these sonnets and ballate daily month in and month out, and have been daily drawn deeper into them and daily into contemplation of things that are not of an hour. And I deem, for this, that *voi altri pochi* who understand, will love me better for my labor in proportion as you read more carefully.

For the rest, I can but quote an envoi, that of Guido's Canzone "*Donna mi prega*":

Thou mayest go assurèd, my Canzone,
Whither thou wilt, for I have so adorned thee
That praise shall rise to greet thy reasoning
Mid all such folk as have intelligence;
To stand with any else, thou 'st no desire.

EZRA POUND.

November 15, 1910.

THE SONNETS AND BALLATE

OF

GUIDO CAVALCANTI

SONETTO I

VOI, che per gli occhi miei passaste al core,
E svegliaste la mente che dormia,
Guardate a l' angosciosa vita mia,
Che sospirando la distrugge Amore,
E' va tagliando di si gran valore,
Che i deboluzzi spiriti van via:
Campa figura nova in signoria,
E boce è quando mostra lo dolore:
Questa vertù d' Amor, che m' ha disfatto,
Da' vostri occhi gentil presta si mosse,
Lanciato m' ha d' un dardo entro lo fianco;
Sì giunse il colpo dritto al primo tratto,
Che l' anima tremando si riscosse,
Veggendo morto il cor nel lato manco.

SONNET I

YOU, who do breach mine eyes and touch the heart,
And start the mind from her brief reveries,
Might pluck my life and agony apart,
Saw you how love assaileth her with sighs,
And lays about him with so brute a might
That all my wounded senses turn to flight.
There 's a new face upon the seigniory,
And new is the voice that maketh loud my grief.

Love, who hath drawn me down through devious ways,
Hath from your noble eyes so swiftly come!
'T is he hath hurled the dart, wherefrom my pain,
First shot's resultant! and in flanked amaze
See how my affrighted soul recoileth from
That sinister side wherein the heart lies slain.

SONETTO II

IO vidi gli occhi dove Amor si mise,
Quando mi fece di sè pauroso,
Che mi sguardar come fosse annoioso;
Allora, dico, che il cor si divise;
E se non fosse, che donna mi rise,
Io parlerei di tal guisa doglioso,
Ch' Amor medesmo ne faria cruccioso,
Che fe l' immaginar, che mi conquise.
Dal ciel si mosse un spirito in quel punto,
Che quella donna mi degnò guardare,
E vennesi a posar nel mio pensiero,
E lì mi conta sì d' amor lo vero,
Che ogni sua vertù veder mi pare,
Sì come fossi dentro al suo cor giunto.

SONNET II

I SAW the eyes, where Amor took his place
When love's might bound me with the fear thereof,
Look out at me as they were weary of love.
I say: The heart rent him as he looked on this,
And were't not that my Lady lit her grace,
Smiling upon me with her eyes grown glad,
Then were my speech so dolorously clad
That Love should mourn amid his victories.

The instant that she deigned to bend her eyes
Toward me, a spirit from high heaven rode
And chose my thought the place of his abode
With such deep parlance of love's verities
That all Love's powers did my sight accost
As though I'd won unto his heart's mid-most.

SONETTO III

O DONNA mia, non vedestu colui,
Che su lo core mi tenea la mano,
Quand' io ti rispondea fiochetto e piano
Per la temenza de gli colpi sui?
El fu Amore, che trovando vui
Meco ristette, che venìa lontano[1]
A guisa d' uno arcier presto soriano,
Acconcio sol per ancidere altrui,
E trasse poi degli occhi miei sospiri.
I quai si gittan da lo cor sì forte,
Ch' io mi partii sbigottito fuggendo.
Allor mi parse di seguir la morte,
Accompagnato di quelli martiri,
Che soglion consumar altrui piangendo.

[1] *Cioè, io credo, da Venere.* E. P.

SONNET III

O LADY mine, doth not thy sight allege
Him who hath set his hand upon my heart,
When parched responses from my faint throat start
And shudder for the terror of his edge?
He was Amor, who since he found you, dwells
Ever with me, and he was come from far;
An archer is he as the Scythians are
Whose only joy is killing someone else.

My sobbing eyes are drawn upon his wrack,
And such harsh sighs upon my heart he casteth
That I depart from that sad me he wasteth,
With Death drawn close upon my wavering track,
Leading such tortures in his sombre train
As, by all custom, wear out other men.

SONETTO IV

S' IO priego questa donna, che pietate
Non sia nemica del suo cor gentile;
Tu di' ch' io sono sconoscente e vile,
E disperato e pien di vanitate.
Onde ti vien si nova crudeltate?
Già rassomigli a chi ti vede umile,
Saggia, e adorna, ed accorta, e sottile,
E fatta modo di soavitate.
L' anima mia dolente e paurosa
Piange nei sospiri, che nel cor trova,
Sì che bagnati di pianto escon fore:
Allor mi par, ehe ne la mente piova
Una figura di donna pensosa,
Che vegna per veder morir lo core.

SONNET IV

IF I should pray this lady pitiless
That Mercy to her heart be no more foeman,
You 'd call me clownish, vile, and say that
no man
Was so past hope and filled with vanities.

Where find you now these novel cruelties?
For still you seem humility's true leaven,
Wise and adorned, alert and subtle even,
And fashioned out in ways of gentleness.

My soul weeps through her sighs for grievous fear
And all those sighs, which in the heart were found,
Deep drenched with tears do sobbing thence depart,
Then seems that on my mind there rains a clear
Image of a lady, thoughtful, bound
Hither to keep death-watch upon that heart.

SONETTO V

GLI miei folli occhi, che 'n prima guardaro
Vostra figura piena di valore,
Fur quei, che di voi, donna, m' accusaro
Nel fiero loco, ove tien corte Amore.
Immantenente avanti a lui mostraro,
Ch' io era fatto vostro servitore,
Perchè sospiri e dolor mi pigliaro
Vedendo, che temenza avea lo core.
Menarmi tosto senza riposanza
In una parte la 've trovai gente,
Che ciaschedun si dolea d' Amor forte.
Quando mi vider, tutti con pietanza
Dissermi: Fatto sei di tal servente,
Che non dei mai sperare altro che morte.

SONNET V

LADY, my most rash eyes, the first who used
To look upon thy face, the power-fraught,
Were, Lady, those by whom I was accused
In that harsh place where Amor holdeth court.
And there before him was their proof adduced,
And judgment wrote me down: "Bondslave" to thee,
Though still I stay Grief's prisoner, unloosed,
And Fear hath lien upon the heart of me.
For the which charges, and without respite,
They dragged me to a place where a sad horde
Of such as love and whom Love tortureth
Cried out, all pitying as I met their sight,
"Now art thou servant unto such a Lord
Thou 'lt have none other one save only Death."

SONETTO VI

TU m' hai si piena di dolor la mente
Che l' anima sen briga di partire:
E di sospir, che manda il cor dolente
Dicono a gli occhi, che non puon soffrire.
Amore, che lo tuo gran valor sente,
Dice: El mi duol, che ti convien morire
Per questa bella donna, che neente
Pur, che pietate di te voglia udire.
Io fo come colui, ch' è fuor di vita
Che mostra a chi lo guarda ched el sia
Fatto di pietra, o di rame, o di legno:
E porto nello core una ferita,
Che si conduca sol per maestria,
Che sia, com' egli è morto, aperto segno.

SONNET VI

THOU fill'st my mind with griefs so populous
That my soul irks him to be on the road.
Mine eyes cry out, "We cannot bear the load
Of sighs the grievous heart sends upon us."
Love, sensitive to thy nobility,
Saith, "Sorrow is mine that thou must take thy death
From this fair lady who will hear no breath
In argument for aught save pitying thee."
And I, as one beyond life's compass thrown,
Seem but a thing that 's fashioned to design,
Melted of bronze or carven in tree or stone.
A wound I bear within this heart of mine
Which by its mastering quality is grown
To be of that heart's death an open sign.

SONETTO VII

CHI è questa che vien, ch' ogni uom la mira,
Che fa di clarità l' aer tremare!
E mena seco Amor, si che parlare
Null' nom ne puote, ma ciascun sospira.
Ahi, Dio, che sembra quando gli occhi gira?
Dicalo Amor, ch' io nol saprei contare:
Cotanto d' umilta donna mi pare,
Che ciascun' altra in vêr di lei chiam' ira.
Non si potria contar la sua piacenza,
Ch' a lei s' inchina ogni gentil virtute,
E la beltate per sua Dea la mostra.
Non fu sì alta già la mente nostra,
E non si è posta in voi tanta salute,
Che propriamente n' abbiam conoscenza.

SONNET VII

WHO is she coming, drawing all men's gaze,
Who makes the air one trembling clarity
Till none can speak but each sighs piteously
Where she leads Love adown her trodden ways?

Ah God! The thing she's like when her glance strays,
Let Amor tell. 'T is no fit speech for me.
Mistress she seems of such great modesty
That every other woman were called "Wrath."

No one could ever tell the charm she hath
For toward her all the noble Powers incline,
She being beauty's godhead manifest.

Our daring ne'er before held such high quest;
But ye! There is not in you so much grace
That we can understand her rightfully.

For all the noble powers bend toward her
She being beauty's godhead manifest.
Our daring ne'er before held such high quest.
But ye! There is not so much grace astir
In you that we may rightfully regard her.

SONETTO VIII

PERCHÈ non furo a me gli occhi miei spenti,
O tolti sì, che de la lor veduta
Non fusse ne la mente mia venuta
A dire: Ascolta se nel cor mi senti?
Una paura di nuovi tormenti
M' apparve allor si crudele ed acuta,
Che l' anima chiamò: Donna, or ci aiuta,
Che gli occhi, ed io non rimagniam dolenti.
Tu gli hai lasciati sì, che venne Amore
A pianger sovra lor pietosamente
Tanto, che s' ode una profonda boce,
La qual dà suon: Chi grave pena sente
Guardi costui, e vederà 'l suo core
Che Morte 'l porta in man tagliato in croce.

SONNET VIII

AH why! why were mine eyes not quenched for me,
Or stricken so that from their vision none
Had ever come within my mind to say
"Listen, dost thou not hear me in thine heart?"
Fear of new torments was then so displayed
To me, so cruel and so sharp of edge
That my soul cried, "Ah mistress, bring us aid,
Lest th' eyes and I remain in grief always."

But thou hast left them so that Amor cometh
And weepeth over them so piteously
That there 's a deep voice heard whose sound in part
Turned unto words, is this: "Whoever knoweth
Pain's depth, let him look on this man whose heart
Death beareth in his hand cut cruciform."

SONETTO IX

AME stesso di me gran pietà viene
Per la dolente angoscia, ch' io mi veggio
Di molta debolezza: quand' io seggio,
L' anima sento ricoprir di pene:
Tanto mi struggo, perch' io sento bene,
Che la mia vita d' ogni angoscia ha 'l peggio:
La nova donna, a cui mercede io chieggio,
Questa battaglia di dolor mantiene:
Però che quand' io guardo verso lei,
Drizzami gli occhi de lo suo disdegno
Sì fieramente che distrugge il core:
Allor si parte ogni vertù da' miei;
Il cor si ferma per veduto segno,
Dove si lancia crudeltà d' Amore.

SONNET IX

I AM reduced at last to self compassion,
For the sore anguish that I see me in;
At my great weakness; that my soul hath been
Concealed beneath her wounds in such a fashion:
Such mine oppression that I know, in brief,
That to my life ill's worst starred ills befall;
And this strange lady on whose grace I call
Maintains continuous my stour of grief,
For when I look in her direction,
She turns upon me her disdeigning eyen
So harshly that my waiting heart is rent
And all my powers and properties are spent,
Till that heart lieth for a sign ill-seen,
Where Amor's cruelty hath hurled him down.

SONETTO X

DEH spirti miei, quando voi me vedite
Con tanta pena, come non mandate
Fuor de la mente parole adornate
Di pianto doloroso sbigottite?
Deh, voi vedete che 'l core ha ferite
Di sguardo, di piacere e d' umiltate:
Deh, io vi priego, che voi 'l consoliate,
Che son da lui le sue vertù partite.
Io veggio a lui spirito apparire
Alto e gentile, e di tanto valore,
Che fa le sue vertù tutte fuggire.
Deh, io vi priego, che deggiate dire
A l' alma trista, che parla in dolore;
Com' ella fu, e fia sempre d' Amore.

SONNET X

ALAS, my spirits, that ye come to find me
So painful, poor, waylaid in wretchedness,
Yet send no words adorned with deep distress
Forth from my mind to say what sorrows bind me.
Alas, ye see how sore my heart is wounded
By glance, by fair delight and by her meekness;
'Las! Must I pray ye that ye aid his weakness,
Seeing him power-stripped, naked, confounded.

And now a spirit that is noble and haut
Appeareth to that heart with so great might
That all th' heart's virtues turn in sudden flight.

Woe! and I pray you greet my soul as friend,
Who tells through all her grief what things were wrought
On her by Love, and will be to the end.

Cf.

"Se fosse amico il re del universo."

Inf. V, 91.

SONETTO XI

SE mercè fosse amica a' miei desiri,
E 'l movimento suo fosse dal core ;
Di questa bella donna il suo valore
Mostrasse la vertute a' miei martìri ;
D' angosciosi diletti i miei sospiri,
Che nascon de la mente, ov' è Amore ;
E vanno sol ragionando dolore,
E non trovan persona, che gli mìri ;
Girieno agli occhi con tanta vertute,[1]
Che 'l forte, e duro lagrimar, che fanno,
Ritornerebbe in allegrezza e 'n gioia ;
Ma si è al cor dolente tanta noia,
Ed a l' anima trista tanto danno,
Che per disdegno uom non dà lor salute.

[1] Of Guido's relentless irony, in this case directed against himself, the artistic temperament, and "service" generally, this sestet may serve as example.

SONNET XI

IF Mercy were the friend of my desires,
Or Mercy's source of movement were the heart,
Then, by this fair, would Mercy show such art
And power of healing as my pain requires.
From torturing delight my sighs commence,
Born of the mind where Love is situate,
Go errant forth and naught save grief relate
And find no one to give them audience.

They would return to the eyes in galliard mode,
With all harsh tears and their deep bitterness
Transmuted into revelry and joy;
Were 't not unto the sad heart such annoy,
And to the mournful soul such rathe distress
That none doth deign salute them on the road.

SONETTO XII

UNA giovane donna di Tolosa
Bella e gentil, d' onesta leggiadria,
Tant' è diritta, e simigliante cosa
Nè suoi dolci occhi de la donna mia,
Che fatto ha dentro al cor desiderosa
L' anima in guisa, che da lui si svia,
E vanne a lei; ma tanto è paurosa,
Che non le dice di qual donna sia.
Quella la mira nel suo dolce sguardo,
Ne lo qual fece rallegrare Amore,
Perchè v' è dentro la sua donna dritta:
Poi torna piena di sospir nel core,
Ferita a morte d' un tagliente dardo,
Che questa donna nel partir le gitta.

SONNET XII

THE grace of youth in Toulouse ventureth;
She 's noble and fair, with quaint sincerities,
Direct she is and is about her eyes
Most like to our Lady of sweet memories.
So that within my heart desirous
She hath clad the soul in fashions peregrine.[1]
Pilgrim to her he hath too great chagrin
To say what Lady is lord over us.
This soul looks deep into that look of hers,
Wherein he rouseth Love to festival,
For deep therein his rightful lady resteth.
Then with sad sighing in the heart he stirs,
Feeling his death-wound as that dart doth fall
Which this Tolosan by departure casteth.

[1] Vita Nuova XLI, 46, and sonnet 24 and sonnet V, l. 4: "*In guisa che da lui si svia e vanne a lei.*"

SONETTO XIII

PER gli occhi fiere un spirito sottile,
Che fa in la mente spirito destare,
Dal qual si muove spirito d' amare,
Ch' ogn' altro spiritel si fa gentile.
Sentir non può di lui spirito vile,
Di cotanta vertù spirito appare:
Questo è lo spiritel, che fa tremare
Lo spiritel, che fa la donna umile.
E poi da questo spirito si muove
Un altro dolce spirito soave,
Che segue un spiritello di mercede;
Lo quale spiritel spiriti piove;
Ch' ha di ciascuno spirito la chiave,
Per forza d' uno spirito, che 'l vede.

Concerning the source, the affects and the progeny of the little spirit of pure love:

Born of the perception of beauty, he arouseth that power of the mind whence is born that quality of love which ennobleth every sense and every desire; misunderstanded of base minds who comprehend not his power, he is the cause of that love in woman which teacheth modesty. Thus from him is born that love in woman whence is born Mercy, and from Mercy "as a gentle rain from heaven" descend those spirits which are the keys of every spirit, perforce of the one spirit which seeth.

SONNET XIII

SUBTLE the spirit striking through the eyes
Which rouseth up a spirit in the mind
Whence moves a spirit unto love inclined
Which breeds in other sprites nobilities.
No turbid spirit hath the sense which sees
How greatly empowered a spirit he appeareth;
He is the little breath which that breath feareth,
Which breedeth virginal humilities.
Yet from this spirit doth another move
Wherein such tempered sweetness rightly dwells
That Mercy's spirit followeth his ways,
And Mercy's spirit as it moves above
Rains down those spirits that ope all things else,
Perforce of One who seeth all of these.

SONETTO XIV

CERTO non è da l' intelletto accolto
Quel che staman ti fece disonesto:
Or come ti mostrò mendico presto
Il rosso spiritel, che apparve al volto.
Sarebbe forse, che t' avesse sciolto
Amor da quella, ch' è nel tondo sesto,
O che vil raggio t' avesse richiesto
A far te lieto, ov' io son tristo molto?
Di te mi duole in me puoi veder quanto:
Che me ne fiede mia donna a traverso,
Tagliando ciò, che Amor porta soave,
Ancor dinanzi mi è rotta la chiave,
Che del disdegno suo nel mio cor verso;
Si che amo l' ira, e la tristezza, e 'l pianto.

SONNET XIV

SURELY thine intellect gives no embrace
To him who hath bred this day's dishonesty;
How art thou shown for beggared suddenly
By that red spirit showing in thy face!
Perhaps it is some love within thee breedeth
For her who 's folly's circumscription,
Perhaps some baser light doth call thee on
To make thee glad where mine own grief exceedeth.

Thou art my grief, my grief to such extent
That I trust not myself to meet Milady,
Starving myself of what Love sweetest lent me
So that before my face that key 's forbent
Which her disdeign turned in my heart and made me
Suitor to wrath and sadness and lamenting.

SONETTO XV

AVETE in voi li fiori, e la verdura,
E ciò che luce, o è bello a vedere.
Risplende più, che 'l sol vostra figura,
Chi voi non vede, mai non può valere.
In questo mondo non ha creatura
Sì piena di beltà, nè di piacere:
E chi d' Amor temesse, l' assicura
Vostro bel viso, e non può più temere.
Le donne, che si fanno compagnia
Assai mi piacen per lo vostro amore;
Ed io le prego per lor cortesia,
Che qual più puote, più vi faccia onore,
Ed aggia cara vostra signoria,
Perchè di tutte siete la migliore.

E lo nome di questa donna era Giovanna, salvo che per la sua beltade, secondo ch' altre crede, imposto l'era nome Primavera: e così era chiamata. Dante, Vita Nuova, XXIV.

Cf. Purgatorio, XXVIII, 49 et circa; ref. "Matelda," by Adolpo Borgognoni: pub. S. Lapi, Citta da Castello.

SONNET XV

THOU hast in thee the flower and the green
And that which gleameth and is fair of sight,
Thy form is more resplendent than sun's sheen;
Who sees thee not, can ne'er know worth aright.
Nay, in this world there is no creature seen
So fashioned fair and full of all delight;
Who fears Amor, and fearing meets thy mien,
Thereby assured, he solveth him his fright.

The ladies of whom thy cortège consisteth
Please me in this, that they've thy favour won;
I bid them now, as courtesy existeth,
Holding most dear thy lordship of their state,
To honour thee with powers commensurate,
Sith thou art thou, that art sans paragon.

SONETTO XVI

A Guido Orlandi

LA bella donna, dove Amor si mostra,
Che tanto è di valor pieno ed adorno,
Tragge lo cor de la persona vostra,
E prende vita in far con lei soggiorno.
Perchè ha sì dolce guardia la sua chiostra,
Che il sente in India ciascum Unicorno:
E la vertù de l' armi a farvi giostra
Verso di noi fa crudel ritorno.
Ch' ella è per certo di sì gran valenza,
Che già non manca a lei cosa di bene,
Ma creatura lo creò mortale.
Poi mostra, che in ciò mise provvidenza;
Che al vostro intendimento si conviene
Far pur conoscer quel, che a lei sia tale.

SONNET XVI

To Guido Orlando

THIS most lief lady, where doth Love display him
So full of valour and so vestured bright,
Bids thy heart "Out!" He goes and none
gainsay him;
And he takes life with her in long delight.
Her cloister's guard is such that should you journey
To Ind you 'd see each unicorn obey it;
Its armed might against thee in sweet tourney
Cruel riposteth, thou canst not withstay it.
Though she be surely in her valliancies
Such that she lacks not now worth's anything,
Still I believe her to be mortal creature;
Whence seems it, that (and here some foresight is)
If thou wert made aware of this, thou 'ldst bring
Her to partake somewhat of some such nature.

For the final lines Rossetti gives:

Yet she 's created for a mortal creature;
In her is shown what God's providence is;
Sufficeth she unto thy mind to bring
Knowledge of it, seeing it shares her nature.

SONETTO XVII

A Bernardo da Bologna

CIASCUNA fresca, e dolce fontanella
Prende in sè sua chiarezza, e vertute,
Bernardo amico mio; e sol da quella,
Che ti rispose a le tue rime acute.
Perocchè in quella parte ove favella
Amor de la bellezze, che ha vedute,
Dice, che questa gentilesca e bella
Tutte nuove adornezze ha in sè compiute,
Avvegnachè la doglia io porti grave
Per lo sospiro che di me fa lume,
Lo core ardendo in la disfatta nave,
Mando io a la Pinella un grande fiume
Piena di lancie, servito da schiave,
Belle, ed adorne di gentil costume.

Var. l. 2, "*Prende in Liscian.*"

Concerning Pinella, he replies to a sonnet by Bernardo da Bologna and explains why they have sweet waters in Galicia (Liscian).

SONNET XVII

NOW every cool small spring that springeth sweetly
Takes clarity and virtue in Liscian climes,
Bernard my friend, from one sole source, discretely:
'T is she who answereth thy sharpened rimes.
For in that place where Love's reports are laid
Concerning all who to his sight are led,
He saith that this so gracious and fair maid
Hath to herself all graces gatherèd.

Whereas my grief in this is grown more grave
And sighs have turned me to one light and flame,
I send my burning heart, in her acclaim
Unto Pinella, upon a magic stream
Where fairies and their fair attendants gleam,
In this wrecked barque! where their show is so brave!

SONETTO XVIII

BELTÀ di donna, e di saccente core,
E cavalieri armati, che sian genti,
Cantar d' augelli, e ragionar d' amore,
Adorni legni in mar, forti e correnti:
Aria serena, quando appar l' albore,
E bianca neve scender senza venti,
Rivera d' acqua, e prato d' ogni fiore,
Oro, e argento, azzurro in ornamenti.
Ciò che puo la beltade e la valenza,
De la mia Donna in suo gentil coraggio,
Par, che rassembre vile a chi ciò guarda;
E tanto ha più d' ogni altra conoscenza
Quanto lo ciel di questa terra è maggio,
A simil di natura ben non tarda.

SONNET XVIII

BEAUTY of woman, of the knowing heart,
And courtly knights in bright accoutrement
And loving speeches and the small birds' art,
Adorned swift ships which on high seas are sent,
And airs grown calm when white the dawn appeareth
And white snow falling where no wind is bent,
Brook-marge and mead where every flower flareth,
And gold and silver and azure and ornament:

Effective 'gainst all these think ye the fairness
And valour of my Lady's lordly daring?

Yea, she makes all seem base vain gathering,
And she were known above whome'er you 'd bring
As much as heaven is past earth's comparing;
Good seeketh out its like with some address.

SONETTO XIX

NOVELLA ti so dire, odi Nerone,
Che i Buondelmonti trieman di paura,
E tutti i Fiorentin non gli assicura
Vedendo che tu hai cor di lione.
E più treman di te, che d' un dragone,
Veggendo la tua faccia, che è sì dura
Che non lo riterrian ponti, nè mura,
Ma sì la tomba del re Faraone.
O come fai grandissimo peccato,
Sì alto sangue volver discacciare,
Che tutti vanno via senza ritegno!
Ma ben è vêr che rallargar lo pegno,
Di che potresti l' anima salvare,
Se fussi paziente del mercato.

He suggests to his kinsman Nerone that there may be one among all the Buondelmonti of whom they might in time make a man.

SONNET XIX

NEWS have I now for thee, so hear, Nerone,
How that the Buondelmonti shake with fear,
And all the Florentines can not assure them,
Seeing thou hast in thee the lion-heart.
They fear thee more than they would fear a dragon,
Seeing that face of thine, how set it is
That neither bridge nor walls could hold against it
Lest they were strong as is King Pharo's tomb.
Oh how thou dost of smoky sins the greatest
In that thou wouldst drive forth such haughty blood
Till all be gone, gone forth without retention.
But sooth it is, thou might'st extend the pawn
Of one whose soul thou *mightest* give salvation
Wert thou more patient in thine huckstering.

SONETTO XX

L'ANIMA mia vilmente è sbigottita
De la battaglia, ch' ella sente al core;
Che se pur si avvicina un poco Amore
Più presto a lei che non soglia, ella muore.
Sta come quei, che non ha più valore,
Ch' è per temenza dal mio cor partita:
E chi vedesse com' ella v' è gita,
Diria per certo: questa non ha vita.
Per gli occhi venne la battaglia pria,
Che ruppe ogni valor immantenente,
Sì che dal colpo fier strutta è la mente.
Qua lunque è quel, che più allegrezza sente,
S' ei vedesse il mio spirito gir via,
Si grande è la pietà che piangeria.

SONNET XX

SO vilely is this soul of mine confounded
By strife grown audible within the heart
That if toward her some frail Love but start
With unaccustomed speed, she swoons astounded.

She is as one in whom no power aboundeth;
Lo, she forsakes my heart through fearfulness,
And any seeing her, how prone she is,
Would deem her one whom death's sure cloak
surroundeth.

Through th' eyes, as through the breach in wall,
her foes
Came first to attack and shattered all defense,
Then spoiled the mind with their down-rained blows.

Whoe'er he be who holdeth joy most close
Would, should he see my spirit going hence,
Weep for the pity and make no pretense.

Cf. Sonnet I.

SONETTO XXI

VEDER potesti, quando voi scontrai,
Quello pauroso spirito d' Amore,
Lo qual suol apparer quand' uom si more,
Che in altra guisa non si vede mai.
Egli mi fu sì presso, che pensai,
Ch' egli ancidesse il mio dolente core,
Allor si mise nel morto colore
L' anima trista in voler tragger guai.
Ma poi si tenne quando vide uscire
Da gli occhi vostri un lume di mercede,
Che porse dentro al cor una dolcezza.
E quel sottile spirito, che vede
Soccorse gli altri, che credean morire
Gravati di angosciosa debolezza.

SONNET XXI

THE DRED SPIRIT

THOU mayest see, who seest me face to face,
That most dred spirit whom Love summoneth
To meet with man when a man meets with Death;
One never seen in any other case.
So close upon me did this presence show
That I thought he would slay my heart his dolour
And my sad soul clad her in the dead colour
That most accords the will and ways of woe.
Then he restrained him, seeing in true faith
The piteous lights forth-issue from your eyes
The which bore to my heart their foreign sweetness,
While the perceptive sense with subtle fleetness
Rescued those others[1] who had considered death
The one sure ending for their miseries.

[1] The senses or the spirits of the senses.

SONETTO XXII

A Dante Alighieri

VEDESTI al mio parere ogni valore
E tutto gioco, e quanto bene uom sente,
Se fusti in pruova del signor valente,
Che signoreggia il mondo de l' onore;
Poi vive in parte, dove noia muore,
E tien ragion ne la piatosa mente;
Si va soave ne' sonni a la gente,
Che i cor ne porta sanza far dolore.
Di voi lo cor se ne portò, veggendo,
Che vostra donna la morte chiedea:
Nodrilla d' esto cor, di ciò temendo.
Quanto t' apparve, che sen gìa dogliendo,
Fu dolce sonno, ch' allor si compiea,
Che 'l suo contrario lo venìa vincendo.

In Vita Nuova III, Dante writes: "Many replied to this sonnet (*A ciascun' alma presa, e gentil core*) with varying interpretations; among those who replied was he whom I call first of my friends; he wrote at that time a sonnet which began:

'*Vedesti al mio parere ogni valore.*'

And this was, as it were, the inception of the friendship between us, when he learned that I was the one who had sent him this (sonnet)."

SONNET XXII

To Dante, in answer to the first sonnet of the Vita Nuova.

THOU sawest, it seems to me, all things availing,
And every joy that ever good man feeleth.
Thou wast in proof of that lord valorous
Who through sheer honour lords it o'er the world.
Thou livest in a place where baseness dieth,
And holdest reason in the piteous mind:
So gently move the people in this sleep
That the heart bears it 'thout the feel of grief.

Love bore away thy heart, because in his sight
Was Death grown clamorous for one thou lovest,
Love fed her with thy heart in dread of this,
Then, when it seemed to thee he left in sadness,
A dear dream was it which was there completed
Seeing it contrary came conquering.

Note: Dante, V. n. III. "The true significance of the dream was not then seen by anyone."

SONETTO XXIII

Al Medesimo

IO vengo il giorno a te infinite volte,
E trovoti pensar troppo vilmente:
Molto mi duol de la gentil tua mente,
E d' assai tue virtù, che ti son tolte.
Solevati spiacer persone molte;
Tuttor fuggivi la noiosa gente:
Di me parlavi sì coralemente,
Che tutte le tue rime avea accolte.
Or non mi ardisco, per la vil tua vita,
Far dimostranza, che 'l tuo dir mi piaccia;
Nè 'n guisa vegno a te che tu mi veggi.
Se 'l presente sonetto spesso leggi
Lo spirito noioso, che ti caccia,
Si partirà da l' anima invilita.

SONNET XXIII

To Dante, rebuking him for his way of life after the death of Beatrice.

I DAILY come to thee uncounting times
And find thee ever thinking over vilely;
Much doth it grieve me that thy noble mind
And virtue's plenitude are stripped from thee;

Thou wast so careless in thy fine offending,
Who from the rabble alway held apart,
And spoke of me so straightly from the heart
That I gave welcome to thine every rime.

And now I care not, sith thy life is baseness
To give the sign that thy speech pleaseth me,
Nor come I to thee in guise visible,
Yet if thou 'lt read this sonnet many a time,
That malign spirit which so hunteth thee
Will sound forloyn [1] and spare thy affrighted soul.

[1] The recall of the hounds.

SONETTO XXIV

Al Medesimo

SE vedi Amore, assai ti prego, Dante,
In parte, la 've Lappo sia presente,
Che non ti gravi di por sì la mente,
Che mi riscrivi, s' egli il chiama amante:
E se la donna gli sembra aitante,
E se fa vista di parer servente:
Chè molte fiate così fatta gente
Suol per gravezza d' Amor far sembiante:
Tu sai che ne la corte, là ove regna
Non può servire uomo, che sia vile
A donna, che là dentro sia perduta:
Se la soffrenza lo servente aiuta,
Puoi di leggier conoscer nostro stile,
Lo quale porta di mercede insegna.

SONNET XXIV

DANTE, I pray thee, if thou Love discover
In any place where Lappo Gianni is, —
If 't irk thee not to move thy mind in this,
Write me these answered: Doth he style him
"Lover?";
And, "Doth the lady seem as one approving?";
And, "Makes he show of service with fair skill?";
For many a time folk made as he is, will
To assume importance, make a show of loving.

Thou know'st that in that court where Love puts on
His royal robes, no vile man can be servant
To any lady who were lost therein;
If servant's suff'ring doth assistance win,
Our style could show unto the least observant,
It beareth mercy for a gonfalon.

SONETTO XXV

GUARDA, Manetto, quella sgrignutuzza,
E pon ben mente com' è sfigurata,
E come bruttamente è divisata,
E quel che par, quand' ella si raggruzza.
E s'ella fosse vestita d' un' uzza
Con cappellina e di vel soggolata,
E apparisse di dì accompagnata
D' alcuna bella donna gentiluzza,
Tu non avresti iniquità sì forte,
Nè tanta angoscia, o tormento d' amore,
Nè sì rinvolto di malinconia,
Che tu non fossi a rischio de la morte
Di tanto rider, che aprirebbe il core,
O tu morresti, o fuggiresti via.

He is in part parodying Guido Guinicelli's technically questionable sonnet, "*Chi vedesse a Lucia un var capuzzo.*"

SONNET XXV

"Hoot Zah!!!"

COME, come Manetto, look upon this scarecrow
And set your mind upon its deformations,
Compute th' extent of its sad aberrations,
Say what it looks like where she scarcely dare go!

Nay, were she in a cloak most well concealèd
And snugly hooded and most tightly veiled
If, by her, daylight should once be assailed
Though by some noble woman partly healèd,

Still you could not be so sin-laden or quite
So bound by anguish or by love's abstractions
Nor so enwrapped in naked melancholy
But you were brought to deathly danger, solely
By laughter, till your sturdy sides grew fractions,
'Struth you were dead, or sought your life in flight.

SONETTO XXVI

L' IMAGIN MORTA

CERTO mie rime a te mandar vogliendo
Del grave stato quale il mio cor porta,
Amor m' apparve in un' imagin morta,
E disse : Non mandar, ch' io ti rispendo.
Pero che se l' amico è quel, ch' io intendo,
E' non avra gia si la mente accorta,
Ch' udendo la ingiuriosa cosa, e torta,
Ch' io ti fo soffrir tuttora ardendo,
Temo non prenda tale smarrimento,
Che avanti, che udito abbia tua pesanza,
Non si diparta da la vita il core.
E tu conosci ben, ch' io sono Amore,
E ch' io ti lascio questa mia sembianza,
E portone ciascun tuo pensamento.

Note: To him who understands it this is the most terrible of all the sonnets.

SONNET XXVI

OF LOVE IN A DEAD VISION

NAY, when I would have sent my verses to thee
To say how harshly my heart is oppressed,
Love in an ashen vision manifest
Appeared and spake : "Say not that I foredo thee,

For though thy friend be he I understand
He will not yet have his mind so enured
But that to hear of all thou hast endured,
Of that blare flame that hath thee 'neath its hand,

Would blear his mind out. Verily before !
Yea, he were dead, heart, life, ere he should hear
To the last meaning of the portent wrought.

And thou ; thou knowest well I am Amor
Who leave with thee mine ashen likeness here
And bear away from thee thine every thought."

SONETTO XXVII

S' IO fossi quello, che d'Amor fu degno,
Del qual non trovo sol che rimembranza,
E la donna tenesse altra sembianza,
Assai mi piaceria sì fatto segno.
E tu, che se' de l' amoroso regno
Là onde di mercè nasce speranza,
Riguarda, se 'l mio spirito ha pesanza,
Ch' un presto arcier di lui ha fatto segno;
E tragge l' arco, che li tese Amore
Sì lietamente, che la sua persona
Par che di giuoco porti signoria.
Or odi maraviglia, ch' ella fia,
Lo spirito fedito li perdona
Vedendo, che li strugge il suo valore.

SONNET XXVII

WERE I that I that once was worthy of Love
(Of whom I find naught now save the
remembrance)
And if the lady had another semblance,
Then would this sort of sign please me enough.

Do thou, who art from Love's clear realm returned,
Where Mercy giveth birth to hopefulness,
Judge as thou canst from my dim mood's distress
What bowman and what target are concerned.

Straining his arc, behold Amor the bowman
Draweth so gaily that to see his face
You 'd say he held his rule for merriment,
Yet hear what's marvelous in all intent:
The smitten spirit pardoneth his foeman
Which pardon doth that foeman's power debase.

Anyone who can, from the text as it stands, discern what happens to whom in the final lines of this sonnet, is at liberty to emend my translation.

SONETTO XXVIII

UN amoroso sguardo spiritale
M' ha rinovato Amor tanto piacente,
Che assai più che non suole uomo, m' assale,
Ed a pensar mi stringe coralmente
Vêr la mia donna, verso cui non vale
Mercè, nè pietà, nè esser soffrente,
Che sovent' ore mi dà pena tale,
Che 'n poca parte il cor la vita sente.
Ma quando sento, che si dolce sguardo
Per mezzo gli occhi passò dentro al core,
E posevi uno spirito di gioia,
Di farne a lei mercè giammai non tardo;
Così pregata fosse ella d' Amore
Che un po' di pietà non fusse noia.

SONNET XXVIII

A LOVE-LIT glance with living powers fraught
Renewed within me love's extreme delight,
So love assails me with unwonted might,
And cordially he driveth me in thought
Towards my lady with whom 'vaileth not
Mercy nor pity nor the suffering wrought,
So oft and great, her torments on me fall
That my heart scarce can feel his life at all.

But when I feel that her so sweet regard
Passeth mine eyes and to the heart attaineth
Setting to rest therein spirits of joy,
Then do I give her thanks and without retard;
Love asked her to do this, and that explaineth
Why this first pity doth no annoy.

SONETTO XXIX

A Dante Alighieri

DANTE, un sospiro messagger del core
Subitamente m' assalì dormendo ;
Ed io mi disvegliai allor temendo,
Ched egli fosse in compagnia d' Amore :
Poi mi girai, e vidi il servitore
Di' Mona Lagia, che venia dicendo,
Aiutimi pietà, sì che dicendo
Io presi di pietà tanto valore.
Ch' io giunsi Amore, che affilava i dardi :
Allor lo domandai del suo tormento,
Ed elli mi rispose in questa guisa :
Dì' al servente, che la donna è presa,
E tengola per far suo piacimento,
E se crede, dì' che agli occhi guardi.

SONNET XXIX

DANTE, a sigh, that's the heart's messenger
Assailed me suddenly as I lay sleeping,
Aroused, I fell straightway into fear's keeping,
For Love came with that sigh as curator.

And I turned straight and saw the servitor
Of Monna Lagia, who came there a-crying,
"Ah pity! Aid me!" and at this his sighing
I took from Pity this much power and more.

That I found Love a-filing javelins
And asked him of both torment and solution,
And in this fashion came that Lord's replies:
"Say to the servant that his service wins.
He holds the Lady to his pleasure won.
If he'd believe it, let him watch her eyes."

SONETTO XXX

IO temo, che la mia disavventura
Non faccia sì, ch' io dica : Io mi dispero :
Però ch' io sento nel cor un pensiero,
Che fa tremar la mente di paura.
E par ch' ei dica : Amor non t' assicura
In guisa che tu possa di leggiero
A la tua donna sì contare il vero,
Che morte non ti ponga in sua figura.
De la gran doglia, che l' anima sente,
Si parte da lo core un tal sospiro,
Che va dicendo : Spiritei fuggite.
Allor null' uom, che sia pietosa, miro,
Che consolasse mia vita dolente,
Dicendo : Spiritei, non vi partite.

A. C. S. Triumph of Time. Cf. stanza 30, l. 7–8.

SONNET XXX

I FEAR me lest unfortune's counter thrust
Pierce through my throat and rip out my despair.
I feel my heart and that thought shaking there
Which shakes the aspen mind with his distrust,
Seeming to say, "Love doth not give thee ease
So that thou canst, as of a little thing,
Speak to thy Lady with full verities,
For fear Death set thee in his reckoning.

By the chagrin that here assails my soul
My heart's parturèd of a sigh so great
It cryeth to the spirits: "Get ye gone!"
And of all piteous folk I come on none
Who seeing me so in my grief's control
Will aid by saying e'en: "Nay, Spirits, wait!"

SONETTO XXXI

O TU che porti ne gli occhi sovente
Amor tenendo tre saette in mano,
Questo mio spirto, che vien di lontano
Ti raccomanda l' anima dolente:
La qual ha già feruta ne la mente
Di due saette l' arcier soriano,
E a la terza apre l' arco, ma sì piano,
Che non m' aggiunge, essendoti presente
Perchè saria de l' alma la salute,
Che quasi giace infra le membra morta
Di due saette, che fan tre ferute.
La prima dà piacere e disconforta,
E la seconda desìa la virtute
De la gran gioia, che la terza porta.

SONNET XXXI

YOU, who within your eyes so often carry
That Love who holdeth in his hand three arrows,
Behold my spirit, by his far-brought sorrows,
Commends to you a soul whom hot griefs harry.

A mind thrice wounded she[1] already hath,
By this keen archer's Syrian shafts twice shot.
The third, less tautly drawn, hath reached me not,
Seeing your presence is my shield 'gainst wrath.

Yet this third shot had made more safe my soul,
Who almost dead beneath her members lies;
For these two arrows give three wounds in all:

The first: delight, which payeth pain his toll;
The second brings desire for the prize
Of that great joy which with the third doth fall.

[1] i. e. The Soul. I have kept the Italian gender in those few sonnets where there is no danger of confusing "her," the soul, with the subjects of other feminine pronouns.

SONETTO XXXII

SE non ti caggia la tua Santalena
Giù per lo colto tra le dure zolle,
E venga a man di qualche villan folle,
Che la stropicci e rendalati appena;
Dimmi, se 'l frutto che la terra mena,
Nasce di secco, di caldo o di molle;
E qual è 'l vento, che l'ammorta, e tolle;
E di che nebbia la tempesta è piena?
E se ti piace, quando la mattina
Odi la voce del lavoratore,
E 'l tramazzar dell' altra sua famiglia?
Io ho per certo, che se la Bettina
Porta soave spirito nel core,
Del nuovo acquisto spesso ti ripiglia.

SONNET XXXII

To Cecco

IF Santalena does not come unto you
Down in the plow-lands where the clods are hard,
But falls into the hands of some hot clod-pole
Who 'll wear her out and hardly then return her ;
Then tell me if the fruit which this land beareth
Is born of drought or heat or from the dampness,
And say what wind it is doth blight and wither
And which doth bring the tempest and the mist.

Say if it please you when at break of morning
You hear the farmer's workman bawling out
And all his family meddling in the noise?

Egad! I think that if your sweet Bettina
Beareth a mellow spirit in her heart
She 'll rescue you once more from your last choice.

SONETTO XXXIII

MORTE gentil, rimedio de' cattivi,
Mercè, mercè, a man giunte ti chieggio,
Viemmi a vedere, o prendimi, che peggio
Mi face Amor, chè miei spiriti vivi
Son constumati, e spenti, sì che quivi,
Dov' io stava gioioso, ora m' avveggio
In parte lasso là, dov' io passeggio,
Pene, e dolor, e 'n pianto vuol ch' arrivi.
E molto maggior mal, a' esser più puote
Morte or è il tempo, che valer mi puoi
Di tormi da le man di tal nimico.
Aimè lasso, quante volte dico:
Amor, perchè fai mal sol pure a' tuoi,
Com' fa quel de l' inferno, che percuote?

SONNET XXXIII

WITH DEATH

DEATH who art haught, the wretched's remedy,
Grace! Grace! hands joined I do beseech it thee,
Come, see and conquer for worse things on me
Are launched by love. My senses that did live,
Consumèd are and quenched, and e'en in this place
Where I was galliard, now I see that I am
Fallen away, and where my steps I misplace,
Fall pain and grief; to open tears I nigh am.
And greater ills He 'd send if greater may be.
Sweet Death, now is the time thou may'st avail me
And snatch me from His hand's hostility.
Ah woe! how oft I cry "Love tell me now:
Why dost thou ill only unto thine own,
Like him of hell who maketh the damned groan?"

SONETTO XXXIV

AMORE, e Mona Lagia, e Guido, ed io
Possiam ben ringraziare un Ser costui,
Che n' ha partiti, sapete da cui?
Nol vo' contar per averlo in oblio.
Poi questi tre più non v' hanno disio;
Ch' eran serventi di tal guisa in lui,
Che veramente più di lor non fui,
Immaginando, ch' elli fosse Iddio.
Sia ringraziato Amor, che se ne accorse
Primieramente, poi la donna saggia,
Che in quel punto li ritolse il core.
E Guido ancor, che n' è del tutto fore,
Ed io ancor, che 'n sua virtute caggia;
Se poi mi piacque, non si crede forse.

SONNET XXXIV

AMORE and Mona Lagia and Guido and I
Can give true thanks unto Ser Such-a-one
Who hath now ridded us of Know-you-who?
I'll name no name for I'd have it forgotten.
And these three people have no wish for it
Though they were servants to him in such wise
That they, in sooth, could not have served him more
Had they mistaken him for God himself.

Let Love be thanked who was first made aware,
And then give thanks unto the prudent lady
Who at Love's instance hath called back her heart;
Then thanks to Guido[1] who's not here concerned
And to me too who drove him back to virtue,
If then he please me, think it not perchance.

[1] i. e. Guido Orlando.

SONETTO XXXV

UNA figura de la donna mia
S' adora Guido, a San Michele in Orto,
Che di bella sembianza, onesta e pia,
De' peccatori è refugio e conforto:
E quale a lei divoto s' umilia
Chi più languisce, più n' ha di conforto:
Gl' infermi sana, i demon caccia via,
E gli occhi orbati fa vedere scorto.
Sana in pubblico loco gran languori:
Con reverenza la gente l' inchina;
Due luminara l' adornan di fuori.
La voce va per lontane cammina;
Ma dicon, ch' è idolatra, i Fra' Minori,
Per invidia, che non è lor vicina.

SONNET XXXV

To Guido Orlando

He explains the miracles of the madonna of Or San Michele, by telling whose image it is.

MY Lady's face it is they worship there.
At San Michele in Orto, Guido mine,
Near her fair semblance that is clear and holy
Sinners take refuge and get consolation.
Whoso before her kneeleth reverently
No longer wasteth but is comforted;
The sick are healed and devils driven forth,
And those with crooked eyes see straightway straight.
Great ills she cureth in an open place,
With reverence the folk all kneel unto her,
And two lamps shed the glow about her form.
Her voice is borne out through far-lying ways
'Till brothers minor cry: "Idolatry,"
For envy of her precious neighborhood.

MADRIGALE

O CIECO mondo, di lusinghe pieno,
Mortal veleno è ciascun tuo diletto,
Fallace e pien d' inganni, e con sospetto.
Folle è colui che ti addrizza il freno,
Quando per men che nulla quel ben perde,
Che sovra ogn' altra Amor luce e sta verde.
Pero gia mai di te colui non curi,
Che 'l frutto vuol gustar di dolci fiori.

MADRIGAL

O WORLD gone blind and full of false deceits,
Deadly 's the poison with thy joys connected,
O treacherous thou, and guileful and suspected:
Sure he is mad who for thy checks retreats
And for scant nothing looseth that green prize
Which over-gleans all other loveliness;

Wherefore the wise man scorns thee at all hours
When he would taste the fruit of pleasant flowers.

BALLATA I

POICHÈ di doglia cor convien ch' io porti,
E senta di piacere ardente foco,
Che di virtù mi tragge a sì vil loco;
Dirò come ho perduto ogni valore.
Io dico, che miei spiriti son morti,
E 'l cor, ch' ha tanta guerra e vita poco:
E se non fosse che 'l morir m' è gioco,
Fare' ne di pietà piangere Amore:
Ma per lo folle tempo, che m' ha giunto,
Mi cangio di mia ferma opinione
In altrui condizione;
Sì ch' io non mostro, quant' i' sento affanno,
Là ond' io ricevo inganno:
Che dentro da lor cor mi passa amanza,
Che se ne porta tutta mia speranza.

BALLATA I

SITH need hath bound my heart in bands of grief,
Sith I turn flame in pleasure's saffron fire,
I sing how I lost a treasure by desire
And left all virtue and am low descended.

I tell, with senses dead, what scant relief
My heart from war hath in his life's small might.
Nay! were not death turned pleasure in my sight
Then Love would weep to see me so offended.

Yet, for I 'm come upon a madder season,
The firm opinion which I held of late
Stands in a changèd state,
And I show not how much my soul is grieved
There where I am deceived
Since through my heart midway a mistress went
And in her passage all mine hopes were spent.

Note: This is not really a ballata but is the first stanza of a lost canzone, one mentioned by Dante in the D.V.E.

BALLATA II

IO vidi donne con la donna mia:
Non che niuna mi sembrasse donna;
Ma simigliavan sol la sua ombria,
Già non la lodo, se non perch' è 'l vero,
E non biasimo altrui, se m' intendete:
Ma ragionando muovesi un pensiero
A dir: Tosto, miei spiriti, morrete,
Crudei, se me veggendo non piangete;
Che stando nel pensier gli occhi fan via
A lagrime del cor, che non la oblia.

BALLATA II

LADIES I saw a-passing where she passed;
Not that they seemed as ladies to my vision,
Who were like nothing save her shadow cast.

I praise her in no cause save verity's
None other dispraise, if ye comprehend me.
A spirit moveth speaking prophecies
Foretelling: Spirits mine, swift death shall end ye,
Cruel! if seeing me no tears forelend ye,
Sith but the being in thought sets wide mine eyes
For sobbing out my heart's full memories.

BALLATA III

SE m' hai del tutto obliato mercede,
Gia pero fede il cor non abbandona;
Anzi ragiona di servire a grato
Al dispietato core.
E qual ciò sente, simil me non crede,
Ma chi tal vede? certo non persona;
Ch' Amor mi dona uno spirito in suo stato,
Che figurato more:
Che quando quel piacer mi stringe tanto,
Che lo sospir si mova,
Par, che nel cor mi piova
Un dolce Amor sì buono,
Ch' io dico: Donna, tutto vostro sono.

BALLATA III

THO' all thy piteous mercy fall away
Not for thy failing shall my faith so fall,
That Faith speaks on of services unpaid
To the unpitièd heart.

What that heart feeleth? Ye believe me not.
Who sees such things? Surely no one at all,
For Love me gives a spirit on his part
Who dieth if portrayed.

Thence when that pleasure so assaileth me,
And the sighing faileth me,
Within my heart a rain of love descendeth
So fragrantly, so purely
That I cry out, "Lady, thou hold'st me surely!"

BALLATA IV

VEDETE, ch' io son un, che vo piangendo,
E dimostrando il giudizio d' Amore;
E già non trovo sì pietoso core,
Che me guardando una volta sospiri.
Novella doglia m' è nel cor venuta,
La qual mi fa dolere e pianger forte;
E spesse volte avvien, che mi saluta
Tanto d' appresso l' angosciosa morte,
Che fa in quel punto le persone accorte,
Che dicono in fra lor: Questi ha dolore;
E già secondo che ne par di fore,
Dovrebbe dent ro aver nuovi martiri.
Questa pesanza ch' è nel cor discesa,
Ha certi spiritei già consumati,
I quali eran venuti per difesa
Del cor dolente, che gli avea chiamati:
Questi lasciaro gli occhi abbandonati,
Quando passò ne la mente un romore,
Il qual dicea: Dentro biltà, che more;
Ma guarda, che biltà non vi si miri.

BALLATA IV

WEEPING ye see me, in Grief's company,
One showing forth Love's jurisdiction.
Of pity-shrouded hearts I find not one
Who sigheth, seeing me disconsolate.

New is the grief that 's come upon my heart,
And mournful is the press of my deep sighs,
And oft Death greeteth me, by tricksome art
Drawn close upon me with his agonies,
Yea close, drawn close till every dullard sees;
I hear their murmuring, "How grief hath bent
"This man! And we from the apparent testament,
"Deem stranger torments in him sublimate."

Within my heart this grievous weight descended
Hath slain that band of spirits which was bent
Heartward, that th' heart might by them be defended.
When the sad heart had summoned them they 'd left
Mine eyes of every other guard bereft
Till Rumour, courier through the mind, ran crying,
"Beauty within, Oyez! Within, is dying.
"On guard lest Beauty see your present state!"

BALLATA V

VEGGIO ne gli occhi de la donna mia
Un lume pien di spiriti d' Amore,
Che portano un piacer novo nel core,
Si che vi desta d' allegrezza vita.
Cosa m' avvien, quand' io le son presente,
Ch' i' non la posso a lo 'ntelletto dire:
Veder mi par de le sue labbia uscire
Una sì bella donna, che la mente
Comprender non la può che 'mmantenente
Ne nasce un altra di bellezza nova:
Da la qual par, ch' una stella si mova,
E dica: Tua salute è dipartita.
Là dove questa bella donna appare
S' ode una voce, che le vien davanti,
E par, che d' umiltà 'l suo nome canti
Sì dolcemente, che s' io 'l vo' contare,
Sento che 'l suo valor mi fa tremare;
E movonsi ne l' anima sospiri,
Che dicon: Guarda, se tu costei miri,
Vedrai la sua virtù nel ciel salita.

BALLATA V

LIGHT do I see within my Lady's eyes
And loving spirits in its plenisphere
Which bear in strange delight on my heart's care
Till Joy 's awakened from that sepulchre.

That which befalls me in my Lady's presence
Bars explanations intellectual,
I seem to see a lady wonderful
Forth issue from Her lips, one whom no sense
Can fully tell the mind of and one whence
Another fair, swift born, moves marvelous,
From whom a star goes forth and speaketh thus:
"Lo, thy salvation is gone forth from thee."

There where this Lady's loveliness appeareth,
There 's heard a voice which goes before her ways
And seems to sing her name with such sweet praise
That my mouth fears to speak what name she beareth,
And my heart trembles for the grace she weareth,
While far in my soul's deep the sighs astir
Speak thus: "Look well! For if thou look on her,
Then shalt thou see her virtue risen in heaven."

Vid. Introduction.

BALLATA VI

LA forte, e nova mia disventura
M' ha disfatto nel core
Ogni dolce pensier, ch' i' avea d' Amore.
Disfatta m' ha già tanto de la vita,
Che la gentil piacevol donna mia
Da l' anima distrutta s' è partita;
Si ch' io non veggio lì, dov' ella sia:
Non è rimasa in me tanta balìa,
Ch' io de lo suo valore
Possa comprender ne la mente fiore.
Vien, che m' uccide un sì gentil pensiero,
Che par, che dica, ch' io mai non la veggia,
Questo tormento dispietato e fiero,
Che struggendo m' incende ed amareggia:
Trovar non posso, a cui pietate chieggia,
Mercè di quel signore,
Che gira la fortuna del dolore.
Pien d' ogni angoscia in loco di paura;
Lo spirito dal cor dolente giace;
Per la fortuna, che di me non cura,
Ch' ha vòlta morte dove assai mi spiace;

[*E dà*

BALLATA VI

THE harshness of my strange and new misventure
Hath in my mind distraught
The wonted fragrance of love's every thought.

Already is my life in such part shaken
That she, my gracious lady of delight,
Hath left my soul most desolate forsaken
And e'en the place she was, is gone from sight;
And there rests not within me so much might
That my mind can reach forth
To comprehend the flower of her worth.

This noble thought is come well winged with death,
Namely, that I shall ne'er see her again,
And this harsh torment, with no pity fraught,
Increaseth bitterness and in its strain
I cry, and find none to attend my pain,
While for the flame I feel,
I thank that lord who turns grief's fortune wheel.

Full of all anguish and within Fear's gates
The spirit of my heart lies sorrowfully,
Thanks to that Fortune who my fortune hates,
Who 'th spun death's lot where it most irketh me

[And

E dà speranza ch' è stata fallace.
Nel tempo, che si more,
M' ha fatto perder dilettevoli ore.
Parole mie disfatte e paurose,
Dove di gir vi piace ve n' andate,
Ma sempre sospirando, e vergognose
Lo nome de la mia donna chiamate:
Io pur rimango in tanta avversitate,
Che qual mira di fore
Vede la morte sotto 'l mio colore.

And given hope that 's ta'en in treachery,
Which ere it died aright
Had robbed me of mine hours of delight.

O words of mine foredone and full of terror,
Whither it please ye, go forth and proclaim
Grief. Throughout all your wayfare, in your error
Make ye soft clamour of my Lady's name,
While I downcast and fallen upon shame
Keep scant shields over me,
To whomso runs, death's colours cover me.

BALLATA VII

ERA in pensier d' Amor, quand' io trovai
Due forosette nove;
L' una cantava: E' piove
Gioco d' Amore in nui.
Era la vista lor tanto soave,
Tanto quieta, cortese ed umile,
Ch' io dissi lor: Voi portate la chiave
Di ciascuna virtute alta, e gentile:
Deh forosette, non mi aggiate a vile:
Per lo colpo, ch' io porto,
Questo cor mi fa morto,
Poichè 'n Tolosa fui.
Elle con gli occhi lor si volser tanto,
Che vider come 'l core era ferito;
E come un spiritel nato di pianto
Era per mezzo de lo colpo uscito.
Poichè mi vider cosi sbigottito,
Disse l' una, che rise;
Guarda, come conquise
Gioia d' Amor costui.
Molto cortesemente mi rispose
Quella, che di me prima aveva riso.

[*Disse:*

BALLATA VII

BEING in thought of love I came upon
Two damsels strange
Who sang, "The joyous rains
Of love descend within us."

So quiet in their modest courtesies
Their aspect coming softly on my vision
Made me reply, "Surely ye hold the keys
O' the virtues noble, high, without omission.
Ah, little maids, hold me not in derision,
For the wound I bear within me
And this heart o' mine ha' slain me.
I was in Toulouse lately."

And then toward me they so turned their eyes
That they could see my wounded heart's ill ease,
And how a little spirit born of sighs
Had issued forth from out the cicatrice.
Perceiving so the depth of my distress,
She who was smiling, said,
"Love's joy hath vanquished
This man. Behold how greatly!"

Then she who had first mocked me, in better part
Gave me all courtesy in her replies.

[She

Disse: La donna che nel cor ti pose
Con la forza d' Amor tutto 'l suo viso,
Dentro per gli occhi ti mirò sì fiso,
Ch' Amor fece apparire:
Se t' è grave il soffrire,
Raccomandati a lui.
L' altra pietosa piena di mercede,
Fatta di gioco in figura d' Amore
Disse: Il cuo colpo, che nel cor si vede,
Fu tratto d' occhi di troppo valore;
Che dentro vi lassaro uno splendore,
Ch' i' nol posso mirare:
Dimmi, se ricordare
Di quegli occhi ti puoi?
A la dura quistione, e paurosa,
La qual mi fece questa forosetta,
Io dissi: E' mi ricorda che 'n Tolosa
Donna m' apparve accordellata e stretta,
La qual Amor chiamava La Mandetta:
Giunse sì presta e forte,
Che 'nfin dentro alla morte
Mi colpir gli occhi sui.

[*Vanne*

She said, "That Lady, who upon thine heart
Cut her full image, clear, by Love's device,
Hath looked so fixedly in through thine eyes
That she's made Love appear there;
If thou great pain or fear bear
Recommend thee unto him!"

Then the other piteous, full of misericorde,
Fashioned for pleasure in love's fashioning:
"His heart's apparent wound, I give my word,
Was gat from eyes whose power 's an o'er great thing,
Which eyes have left in his a glittering
That mine can not endure.
Tell me, hast thou a sure
Memory of those eyes?"

To her dred question with such fears attended,
"Maid o' the wood," I said, "my memories render
Tolosa and the dusk and these things blended:
A lady in a corded bodice, slender
— Mandetta is the name Love's spirits lend her —
A lightening swift to fall,
And naught within recall
Save, Death! My wounds! Her eyes!"

[(Envoi)

Vanne a Tolosa, Ballatetta mia;
Ed entra quietamente a la dorata
Ed ivi chiama, che per cortesia
D' alcuna bella donna sia menata
Dinanzi a quella, di cui t' ho pregata;
E s' ella ti riceve,
Dille con voce leve:
Per mercè vegno a vui.

(Envoi)

Speed Ballatet' unto Tolosa city
And go in softly neath the golden roof
And there cry out, "Will courtesy or pity
Of any most fair lady, put to proof,
Lead me to her with whom is my behoof?"
Then if thou get *her* choice
Say, with a lowered voice,
"It is *thy* grace I seek here."

BALLATA VIII

GLI occhi di quella gentil forosetta
Hanno distretta sì la mente mia
Ch' altro non chiama, che lei, nè disia.
Ella mi fiere sì, quando la sguardo,
Ch' i' sento lo sospir tremar nel core.
Esce da gli occhi suoi, là ond' io ardo,
Un gentiletto spirito d' Amore,
Lo quale è pieno di tanto valore,
Che, quando giugne, l' anima va via,
Come colei, che soffrir nol porria.
Io sento poi gir fuor gli miei sospiri,
Quando la mente di lei mi ragiona:
E veggio piover per l' aer martìri,
Che traggon di dolor la mia persona,
Sì che ciascuna virtù m' abbandona
In guisa, ch' i' non so là ov' i' mi sia:
Sol par, che morte m' aggia in sua balìa.
Sì mi sento disfatto, che mercede
Già non ardisco nel pensier chiamare:
Ch' i' truovo Amor, che dice: Ella si vede
Tanto gentil, che non può 'mmaginare,

[*Ch'*

BALLATA VIII

THE eyes of this gentle maid of the forest
Have set my mind in such bewilderment
That all my wistful thoughts on her are bent.

So doth she pierce me when mine eyes regard her
That I hear sighs a-trembling in mine heart
As from her eyes aye sources of mine ardour
The quaint small spirits of Amor forth-dart
From which small sprites such greater powers start
That when they reach me my faint soul is sent
Exhausted forth to swoon in banishment.

I feel how from mine eyes the sighs forth-fare
When my mind reasoneth with me of her,
Till I see torments raining through the air.
Draggled by griefs, which I by these incur,
Mine every strength turns mine abandoner,
And I know not what place I am toward,
Save that Death hath me in his castle-yard.

And I am so outworn that now for mercy
I am not bold to cry out even in thought,
And I find Love, who speaking saith of her, "See,
She is not one whose image could be wrought.

[Unto

Ch' uom d' esto mondo l' ardisca mirare,
Che non convenga lui tremare in pria:
Ed io, s' i' la guardassi, ne morrìa.
Ballata, quando tu sarai presente
A gentil donna, so che tu dirai
De la mia, angoscia dolorosamente:
Di': Quegli, che me manda a voi, trae guai;
Però che dice, che non spera mai
Trovar pietà di tanta cortesìa,
Ch' a la sua donna faccia compagnia.

Unto her presence no man could be brought
Who did not well to tremble for the daring."
And I? Would swoon if I should meet her faring.

(Envoi)

Go! Ballad mine, and when thy journey has won
Unto my Lady's presence wonderful,
Speak of mine anguish in some fitting fashion,
Sorrowfully thus, "My sender is sorrowful,
Lo, how he saith, he hath no hope at all
Of drawing pity from such Courtesy
As keeps his Lady's gracious company."

BALLATA IX

IN un boschetto trovai pastorella
Più che la stella bella al mio parere.
Capegli avea biondetti e ricciutelli,
E gli occhi pien d' amor, cera rosata;
Con sua verghetta pasturava agnelli;
E scalza, e di rugiada era bagnata:
Cantava come fosse innamorata,
Era adornata di tutto piacere.
D' Amor la salutai 'mmantenente,
E domandai, s' avesse compagnìa:
Ed ella mi rispose dolcemente,
Che sola sola per lo bosco gìa;
E disse: Sappi quando l' augel pìa,
Allor disia lo mio cor drudo avere.
Poichè mi disse di sua condizione,
E per lo bosco augelli udìo cantare,
Fra me stesso dicea: Or è stagione
Di questa pastorella gioi' pigliare;
Mercè le chiesi, sol che di baciare,
E d' abbracciare fosse 'l suo volere.

[*Per*

BALLATA IX

IN wood-way found I once a shepherdess,
More fair than stars are was she to my seeming.

Her hair was wavy somewhat, like dull gold.
Eyes? Love-worn, and her face like some pale rose.
With a small twig she kept her lambs in hold,
And bare her feet were bar the dew-drop's gloze;
She sang as one whom mad love holdeth close,
And joy was on her for an ornament.

I greeted her in love without delaying:
"Hast thou companion in thy solitude?"
And she replied to me most sweetly, saying,
"Nay, I am quite alone in all this wood,
But when the birds 'gin singing in their coverts
My heart is fain that time to find a lover."

As she was speaking thus of her condition
I heard the bird-song 'neath the forest shade
And thought me how 't was but the time's provision
To gather joy of this small shepherd maid.
Favour I asked her, but for kisses only,
And then I felt her pleasant arms upon me.

[She

Per man mi prese d' amorosa voglia,
E disse, che donato m' avea 'l core:
Menommi sotto una freschetta foglia,
Là dov' io vidi fior d' ogni colore;
E tanto vi sentio gioi' e dolzore,
Che Dio d' Amor mi parve ivi vedere.

She held to me with a dear willfulness
Saying her heart had gone into my bosom,
She drew me on to a cool leafy place
Where I gat sight of every coloured blossom,
And there I drank in so much summer sweetness
Meseemed Love's god connived at its completeness.

BALLATA X

POSSO de gli occhi miei novella dire,
La quale è tal, che piace si al core,
Che di dolcezza ne sospira Amore.
Questo novo piacer, che 'l mio cor sente,
Fu tratto sol d' una donna veduta
La quale è sì gentile ed avvenente,
E tanto adorna, che 'l cor la saluta:
Non è la sua biltate conosciuta
Da gente vile: che lo suo colore
Chiama intelletto di troppo valore.
Io veggio, che ne gli occhi suoi risplende
Una virtù d' amor tanto gentile,
Ch' ogni dolce piacer vi si comprende:
E muove allora un' anima sottile,
Rispetto de la quale ogni altra è vile;
E non si può di lei giudicar fore
Altro che dir, quest' è nuovo splendore.
Va Ballatetta, e la mia donna trova;
E tanto la dimanda di mercede,
Che gli occhi di pieta verso te mova

[*Per*

BALLATA X

NOW can I tell you tidings of mine eyes,
News which such pleasure to my heart supplyeth
That Love himself for glory of it sigheth.

This new delight which my heart drinketh in
Was drawn from nothing save a woman seen
Who hath such charm and a so courtley mien
And such fair fashion that the heart is fain
To greet her beauty, which nor base nor mean
Can know, because its hue and qualities demand
Intelligence in him who would understand.

I see Love grow resplendent in her eyes
With such great power and such noble thought
As hold therein all gracious ecstacies,
From them there moves a soul so subtly wrought
That all compared thereto are set at naught
And judgment of her speaks no truth save this:
"A splendour strange and unforseen she is."

(Envoi)
Go, Ballatetta, forth and find my Lady,
Ask if she have it this much of mercy ready,
This namely, that she turn her eyes toward thee?

[Ask

Per quel, che 'n lei ha tutta la sua fede;
E s' ella questa grazia ti concede,
Manda una voce d' allegrezza fore
Che mostri quello che t' ha fatto onore.

Ask in his name whose whole faith rests in her,
And if she gracious, this much grace accord thee,
Offer glad-voiced incense of sweet savour
Proclaiming of whom thou receiv'st such favour.

BALLATA XI

PERCH 'io non spero di tornar giù mai,
Ballatetta, in Toscana,
Va tu leggiera e piana
Dritta a la donna mia,
Che per sua cortesia
Ti fara molto onore.
Tu porterai novelle de' sospiri;
Piene di doglia, e di molta paura;
Ma guarda che persona non ti miri,
Che sia nimica di gentil natura;
Che certo per la mia disavventura
Tu saresti contesa,
Tanto da lei ripresa,
Che mi sarebbe angoscia;
Doppo la morte poscia
Pianto e novel dolore.
Tu senti Ballatetta, che la morte
Mi stringe si, che vita m' abbandona;
E senti, come 'l cor si sbatte forte
Per quel, che ciascun spirito ragiona;
Tanì è distretta gia la mia persona,
Ch' i' non posso soffrire:
Se tu mi vuoi servire
Mena l' anima teco;

[*Molto*

BALLATA XI

BECAUSE no hope is left me, Ballatetta,
Of return to Tuscany,
Light-foot go thou some fleet way
Unto my Lady straightway,
And out of her courtesy
Great honour will she do thee.

Tidings thou bearest with thee sorrow-fain
Full of all grieving, overcast with fear.
On guard! Lest any one see thee or hear,
Any who holds high nature in disdeign,
For sure if so, to my increase of pain,
Thou wert made prisoner
And held afar from her,
Hereby new harms were given
Me, and after death even
Dolour and griefs renewed.

Thou knowest, Ballatetta, that Death layeth
His hand upon me whom hath Life forsaken;
Thou knowest well how great a tumult swayeth
My heart at sound of her whom each sense cryeth
Till all my mournful body is so shaken
That I can not endure here,

[Would'st

Molto di ciò ti preco,
Quando uscira del core.
Deh Ballatetta a la tua amistate
Quest' anima, che triema, raccomando;
Menala teco ne la sua pietate
A quella bella donna, a cui ti mando:
Deh Ballatetta, dille sospirando,
Quando le se' presente:
Questa vostra servente
Vien per istar con vui,
Partita da colui,
Che fu servo d' Amore.
Tu voce sbigottita, e deboletta,
Ch' esci piangendo de lo cor dolente,
Con l' anima, e con questa Ballatetta
Va ragionando de la strutta mente.
Voi troverete una donna piacente
Di si dolce intelletto,
Che vi sarà diletto
Starle davanti ognora:
Anima, e tu l' adora
Sempre nel tuo valore.

Would'st thou make service sure here?
Lead forth my soul with thee
(I pray thee earnestly)
When it parts from my heart here.

Ah, Ballatetta, to thy friendliness,
I do give o'er this trembling soul's poor case.
Bring thou it there where her dear pity is,
And when thou hast found that Lady of all grace
Speak through thy sighs, my Ballad, with thy face
Low bowed, thy words in sum:
"Behold, thy servant is come,
This soul who would dwell with thee,
Assundered suddenly
From Him, Love's servitor.

O smothered voice and weak that tak'st the road
Out from the weeping heart and dolorous
Go crying out my most sad mind's alarm
Forth with my soul and this song piteous
Until thou find a lady of such charm,
So sweetly intelligent
That e'en thy sorrow is rent.
Take thy fast place before her.
And thou, Soul mine, adore her
Alway, with all thy might.

BALLATA XII

QUANDO di morte mi convien trar vita,
E di gravezza gioia,
Come di tanta noia,
Lo spirito d' Amor d' amar m' invita?
Come m' invita lo mio cor d' amare?
Lasso, ch' è pien di doglia,
E da' sospir sì d' ogni parte priso,
Che quasi sol mercè non può chiamare;
E di virtù lo spoglia
L' affanno che m' ha già quasi conquiso;
Canto, piacer con beninanza e riso,
Mi son doglie e sospiri;
Guardi ciascuno e miri,
Che morte m' è nel viso già salita.
Amor, che nasce di simil piacere,
Dentro dal cor si posa,
Formando di desio nova persona,
Ma fa la sua virtù 'n vizio cadere;
Si ch' amar già non osa
Qual sente, come servir guiderdona:
Dunque d' amar perchè meco ragiona?
Credo sol, perchè vede,

[*Ch'*

BALLATA XII

IF all my life be but some deathly moving,
Joy dragged from heaviness;
Seeing my deep distress
How doth Love's spirit call me unto loving?

How summon up my heart for dalliance?
When 't is so sorrowful
And manacled by sighs so mournfully
That e'en the will for grace dare not advance?
Weariness over all
Spoileth that heart of power, despoiling me.
And song, sweet laughter and benignity
Are grown three grievous sighs,
Till all men's careless eyes
May see Death risen to my countenance.

Love that is born of loving like delight,
Within my heart sojourneth
And fashions a new person from desire
Yet toppleth down to vileness all his might,
So all Love's daring spurneth
That man who knoweth service and its hire.
For Love, then why doth he of me inquire?
Only because he sees

[Me

Ch' io dimando mercede
A morte, ch' a ciascun dolor m' addita.
Io mi posso biasmar di gran pesanza,
Più che nessun giammai:
Che morte dentro al cor mi tragge un core,
Che va parlando di crudele amanza,
Che ne' miei forti guai,
M' affanna; laond' io perdo ogni valore.
Quel punto maladetto sia, ch' Amore
Nacque di tal maniera,
Che la mia vita fiera
Gli fu di tal piacere a lui gradita.

Me cry on Death for ease,
While Death doth point me on toward all mischance.

And I can cry for Grief so heavily
As hath man never,
For Death drags to my heart a heart so bent
With wandering speech of her, who cruely
Outwearieth me ever . . . .
O Mistress spoiler of my good intent.
Accursed be the hour when Amor
Was born in such a wise
That my life in his eyes
Grew matter of pleasure and acceptable!

BALLATA XIII

SOL per pietà ti prego, giovinezza,
Che la dischiesta di mercè ti caglia,
Poi che la morte ha mosso la battaglia.
Questa dischiesta anima mia si trova
Sì sbigottita per lo spirto torto,
Che tu non curi, anzi sei fatta pruova,
E mostri bene sconoscenza scorto.
Tu sei nimico, ond' or prego colui,
Ch' ogni durezza muove, vince e taglia,
Ch' anzi a la fine mia mostri che vaglia.
Tu vedi ben, che l' aspra condizione
Ne' colpi di colei, che ha in odio vita,
Mi stringe in parte, ove umiltà si pone;
Sì che veggendo l' anima, ch' è in vita
Di dolenti sospir dicendo volta,
Ch' io veggio ben, com' il valor si scaglia,
Deh prendati mercè sì, che in te saglia.

BALLATA XIII

FOR naught save pity do I pray thy youth
That thou have care for Mercy's cast-away;
Lo, Death 's upon me in his battle array!

And my soul finds him in his decadence
So over-wearied by that spirit wried
(For whom thou car'st not till his ways be tried,
Showing thyself thus wise in ignorance
To hold him hostile) that I pray that mover
And victor and slayer of every hard-wrought thing
That ere mine end he show him conquering.

Sith at his blows, who holds life in despite,
Thou seest clear how in my barbed distress
He wounds me there where dwells mine humbleness,
Till my soul living turneth in my sight
To speech, in words that grievous sighs o'ercover.
Till mine eyes see worth's self wavering
Grant me thy mercies for my covering!

BALLATA XIV

IO priego voi che di dolor parlate,
Che per virtute di naova pietate,
Non disdegnate la mia pena udire.
Davanti agli occhi miei veggio lo core,
E l' anima dolente, che s' ancide,
E muor d' un colpo che le diede Amore,
Entro 'n quel punto, che madonna vide.
Il suo gentile spirito, che ride
Questi è colui che mi si fa sentire:
Questi mi dice: E' ti convien morire.
Se voi sentiste, come 'l cor si dole,
Dentro del vostro cor voi tremereste;
Ch' Amor mi dice sì dolci parole,
Che sospirando pietà chiamereste,
E solamente voi lo 'ntendereste,
Ch' altro cor nol porria pensar, nè dire
Quant' è 'l dolor, che mi convien soffrire.
Lagrime scendon da la mente mia,
Sì tosto come questa donna sente;
E van facendo per gli occhi una via,

BALLATA XIV

I PRAY ye gentles, ye who speak of grief,
Out of new clemency, for my relief
That ye disdeign not to attend my pain.

I see my heart stand up before mine eyes
While my self-slaying mournful soul receiveth
Love's mortal stroke and in that moment dies,
Yea, in the very instant he perceiveth
Milady, and yet that smiling sprite who cleaveth
To her in joy, this very one is he
Who sets the seal of my mortality.

But should ye hear my sad heart's lamentation
Then would a trembling reach your heart's mid-most.
For Love holds with me such sweet conversation
That Pity, by your sighs, ye would accost.
To all less keen than ye the sense were lost,
Nor other hearts could think soft nor speak loudly
How dire the throng of sorrows that enshroud me.

Yea from my mind behold what tears arise
As soon as it hath news of Her, Milady,
Forth move they making passage through the eyes

 [Wherethrough

Per la qual passa un spirito dolente;
Entra per l' aria sì debolemente,
Ch' oltra non puote color discovrire,
Nè immaginar, s' i' ne porria morire.

Wherethrough there goes a spirit sorrowing,
Which entereth the air so weak a thing
That no man else its place discovereth
Or deems it such an almoner of Death.

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